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STATE TO OES/PCI FOR LKAMAKURA/LSPERLING
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SUBJECT: BRAZIL'S MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT PROPOSES SWEEPING NEW
BILATERAL ENV TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INITIATIVE

SUMMARY

¶1. Brazil's Ministry of the Environment (MMA) has expressed its willingness to establish a new level of bilateral technical assistance programs in five general environment-related areas: park management; wetlands protection, chemicals; water systems management and illegal trafficking in wildlife. MMA has expressed a preference for a government-to-government collaboration meaning the Department would help coordinate support directly from U.S. government agencies. The Ministry is proposing that the collaborations be governed by a MOU or similar instrument and would be signed by Minister for the Environment Marina Silva and her Washington counterpart. Post requests the Department's guidance on the type of agreement recommended, and concurrence on proposed steps to coordinate the technical assistance programs.

Expanded Technical Assistance for Environmental Programs

¶2. Brazil's Environment Minister Marina Silva, in a marked departure from the attitude of previous administrations, has indicated her willingness to work with the Embassy Brasilia ESTH office to establish technical assistance programs allowing U.S. experts to work throughout Brazil with their counterparts in a wide range of environment and law enforcement-related initiatives. The subject areas include: the establishment and management of parks in protected areas; wetlands protection; chemicals control; water systems management and illegal trafficking in wildlife. Over the last few weeks, the Embassy Brasilia ESTH Counselor and Officer have been working with members of Minister Silva's staff at the Ministry for the Environment (MMA) to ascertain the scope of activities being requested. A broad outline follows.

Establishment and Management of Parks in Protected Areas

¶3. Environment Minister Marina Silva has established her place in history as Brazil's most effective protector of the Amazon. Since she became Minister in 2003, she has placed 19 million hectares of forest under protection, with 8 million more in the pipeline, which represents one third of total protected lands in Brazil. She successfully passed what is widely considered her legacy legislation that introduces systems for controlled logging and lays the framework for Brazil's first Forest Service. Minister Silva, who has in the past expressed her admiration for the U.S. park system,

has stated that putting land under protection is just the first step, next a system must be created that will encourage a relationship between society and the forests. At present, Brazilians rarely visit the protected areas. The United States, she said, has found a way to welcome the public onto protected lands and generate needed funds to sustain the areas for future generations.

¶14. The Ministry vision of technical assistance spans from beginning to end. Specific areas mentioned were facilities design, road design, construction, maintenance, park operations, transportation, education, concessions management (hotels, restaurants, activities, etc.) and law enforcement issues. The MMA pointed to Yosemite and Yellowstone as examples par-excellence of what they would like to achieve.

Wetland Protection

¶15. The MMA also wants to establish a strong program for wetland protection throughout the country. Brazil is in the process of creating a national wetland strategy and would like to discuss experiences and best practices. They noted that the U.S. system of classifying wetlands has been adopted by RAMSAR. The MMA would like to better understand the science and apply it to Brazilian wetlands in order to provide site-specific goals and protective mechanisms. Expanding on the idea, it was noted that there exists overlap and the potential to incorporate these ideas in marine protection and water resource endeavors as well.

Chemicals

¶16. The Ministry is working on a Strategic Plan for Chemicals and has listed numerous areas for possible collaboration. MMA indicated that it already possesses what it believes to be advanced domestic

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chemical policies/legislation, but seeks greater expertise in the general areas of market controls, safety and waste removal and regional chemical management. Also mentioned was coordination of emissions control efforts and technologies and the creation of an infrastructure to augment its capacity to manage and assess environmental risks associated with chemical pollutants. Work of this kind has already begun on a limited scale with the effects of mercury poisoning on the Amazon environment. Additional topics mentioned were assistance in developing and implementing a Brazilian PRTR (Pollutant Release and Transfer Register) and an examination of the environmental effects of agrotoxins, dioxins and furins.

Water Management

¶17. Oversight of Brazil's water resources belongs to both the MMA, which develops water policy, and the National Water Agency's (ANA), the implementing agency. Brazil is in the fledgling stages of implementing an Integrated Water Resource Management Plan for the entire country. It is the first endeavor of its kind in Latin America and would like to work with U.S. agencies with expertise in this area. Elements of water management that most interest them are federal vs state responsibilities; the economic structure in the United States for water management/delivery and monitoring systems to maintain water quality. The Brazilians have already had conversations regarding technical assistance with General Strock, Chief Engineer for the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. General Strock's planned visit to Brazil this August has apparently been postponed, Post would support it being rescheduled.

Anti-Trafficking in Wildlife

¶18. The Mission already has a rich history of bilateral cooperation in anti-trafficking in wildlife efforts primarily in the training of Brazilian law enforcement officials by U.S. Fish and Wildlife, an initiative funded by the Missions Narcotics Affairs Section. MMA has learned from this training, and now wants to move a step beyond by suggesting a more formal system of law enforcement cooperation

and information exchange. MMA would like to establish ways to aid U.S. customs agents/inspectors at U.S. entry points in identifying illegal cargo at U.S. airports. As examples, they suggested training courses, the production of a guidebook in English differentiating legal from illegal objects, and/or a free hotline allowing rapid access to Brazilian authorities when confirmation is needed.

¶19. MMA also expressed a desire to set up forensic laboratories for identifying the source of animals in transit, noting that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife team highlighted these laboratories as an essential component of effective enforcement. U.S. expertise would be needed in both establishing and training functionaries for the laboratories.

¶10. MMA would also like to open talks on repatriation of U.S. species found illegally in Brazil, noting that many arrive via the border with Paraguay.

¶11. Finally, MMA is anxious to establish training so that customs inspectors on both sides of the border which be familiar with each other's laws.

Next Steps

¶12. Post is fully aware that the development of technical cooperation programs of this magnitude will be a tremendous undertaking. We are also aware that greater detail will be required in order for the Washington agencies to determine which agency has the needed expertise and if collaboration is possible. As a way forward, Post is suggesting a series of DVC's, to be coordinated by the Department, to allow the Brazilian Ministry of Environment technical section chiefs to detail their requests for assistance to U.S. technical agencies. Subsequent TDY visits may also be requested. Post is seeking Bureau support in organizing these DVCs.

¶13. Post is also seeking guidance from L/OES as to the type of instrument that should be negotiated for this initiative. The Ministry has suggested an MOU or similar government-to-government instrument to be signed by Minister for the Environment Marina Silva.

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Comment

¶14. Post is anxious to move forward to take advantage of this window of opportunity. This opening by the Brazilians to reach out to develop closer ties through initiatives that will strength the infrastructure of their country can have significant positive long term benefits for the United States, not the least of which is the development of shared standards. Their request for closer cooperation on border inspections directly supports a key mission priority. Post awaits guidance.

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